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Catalan class

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CATALAN CLASS

This year's Business of Design Week partners with Barcelona, a city with a vibrant design heritage and one of the most community-driven architectural cities on earth

Since its inception in 2002, Hong Kong's Business of Design Week (BODW) has brought some of the most influential figures from the world of design to the city, to inspire and educate on disciplines including architecture, interior design, city planning and product design. Artists and fashion designers mix with technological gurus of the future as ideas are exchanged and business opportunities explored.

For the first time in 2015, BODW's partner will be a city rather than a country and Barcelona has been selected for its artistic heritage, awe-inspiring architecture and community-driven, smart design.

"Partnering with a city rather than a country puts our focus squarely on this year's programme embraced of community and culture," explains Dr Edmund Lee, the Executive Director of the Hong Kong Design Centre – the organiser of BODW. "Design in Barcelona is both community-driven and forward-thinking, but never at the cost of the city's rich traditions."

Lee explains that Hong Kong and Barcelona both value the power of design in creating business and societal values and that it is a timely juncture to explore how good design contributes to cities of the future.

Barcelona is a living dream for designers and architects. Bold, brash, colourful and distinctive, the city manages to seamlessly mix 13th-century Catalan gothic architecture with contemporary buildings by international architects such as Herzog and de Meuron and Frank Gehry. The redevelopment of old buildings can also be seen in EMBT's excellent redesign of the old Santa Caterina Market with its mosaic roof, however Barcelona is most famous for the modernist works of Antoni Gaudi.

Gaudi is recognised internationally for his abstract and surrealist colourful buildings and his magnum opus, the Sagrada Familia.

Speaking this year at BODW, which is supported by Create Hong Kong, is Jordi Faulí the chief

architect of the building. Construction of the Roman Catholic church began in 1882 but the building, with its mixture of gothic and art nouveau styles, was only a quarter completed by the time of Gaudi's death in 1926.

Faulí is the ninth director of the Sagrada Familia and has devoted most of his professional career to the building. As the leading expert on the church, Faulí has boldly claimed that it will be completed by 2026 – the one hundred year anniversary of Gaudi's death.

As the partner city, Barcelona will see a host of speakers including winner of the Best Young Designer of Barcelona Fashion Week Txell Miras, furniture and lighting designer Jorge Pensi and the Spanish artist and designer Javier Mariscal. Architects Benedetta Tagliabue of EMBT and Josep Lluís Mateo of Mateo Arquitectura are also talking, as is Ventura Barba, the Director of the Sonar Music Festival.

Representing the rest of the world are David Butler, VP, Innovation and Entrepreneurship of The Coca-Cola Company and Mark Waites partner in Mother, the UK's largest independent branding agency whose motto is: "To make great work, have fun and make a living. Always in that order."

Mr Agustí Colom, newly appointed Councillor of Barcelona, said: "It's a great honour and challenge to be the first partner city of the BODW. We understand design as a strategic tool with significant social and economic impact, helping to make our companies more competitive, increasing the sustainability of our neighbourhoods and improving citizens' quality of life and wellbeing."

*Business of Design Week -
Barcelona Inspires Design
November 30th to December 5th
Hong Kong Convention
and Exhibition Centre
For more information and online
registration, visit: www.bodw.com*

